

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
IO-13 ACDA-12 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01  
TRSE-00 HA-05 /110 W  
-----101724 041458Z /41

P 032230Z APR 78  
FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1290  
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, CA  
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR SEPARATION SAGGING IN QUEBEC

1. SUMMARY: PUBLIC OPINION POLLING SPECIALIST MAURICE PINARD RECENTLY GAVE ME A COPY OF AN UNPUBLISHED STUDY ENTITLED ANALYSIS OF OPINION POLLS IN QUEBEC, WHICH HE PREPARED IN DECEMBER 1977. THE PAPER SUMMARIZES POLLING EVIDENCE OF LEVELS OF SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE, FOR SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION, AND FOR THE PARTI QUEBECOIS AMONG QUEBEC'S POPULATION OVER THE PAST 10-15 YEARS. ON BASIS OF HIS STUDY, PINARD CONCLUDES THAT SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE HAS STABILIZED SINCE 1973 AT ABOUT 18 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION WHILE OPPOSITION HAS NOW GROWN TO SOME 70 PERCENT. LIKEWISE, SUPPORT FOR SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION (S-A) HAS LINGERED AROUND 40 PERCENT SINCE 1970.

2. HE DIVIDES SUPPORTERS OF S-A INTO CONDITIONALS AND UN-CONDITIONALS. THE FORMER ARE THE LEAST COMMITTED, WITH THEIR SUPPORT BASED ON CREDIBLE ASSURANCE THAT THE ASSOCIATION

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ELEMENT IN THE S-A FORMULA WILL BE REALIZED. RECENT APPARENT DECLINE IN SUPPORT FOR S-A ,HE CONTENDS, MAY BE EXPLAINED IN TERMS OF LOSS OF CREDIBILITY IN ASSOCIATION. OF ALL CONSTITUTIONAL OPTIONS, "REVISED CONSTITUTION" CONSISTENTLY HAS GOTTEN THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SUPPORT IN POLLS. WHEN COMBINED WITH ABOUT 15 PERCENT WHO SUPPORT THE "STATUS QUO," FEDERALIST SOLUTIONS HAVE BEEN FAVORED BY 55-60 PERCENT OF THE QUEBEC POPULATION.

SUPPORT FOR THE PQ HAS ALSO BEEN FALLING STEADILY OVER THE PAST YEAR. PINARD BELIEVES IT NOW STANDS AT ONLY ABOUT 40 PERCENT BUT WILL NOT GO BELOW 35 PERCENT. ONLY ANOTHER SUICIDAL DIVISION IN FEDERALIST RANKS, PINARD ASSERTS, RESULTING IN SPLITTING FEDERALIST VOTES BETWEEN LIBERALS AND UNION NATIONALE COULD RESULT IN PQ ELECTORAL VICTORY IF AN ELECTION WERE TO BE HELD TOMORROW. SUCH A DIVISION NOW SEEMS UNLIKELY. LATEST POLLS SUGGEST THAT THE LIBERALS MAY HAVE OVERTAKEN THE PQ IN POPULAR SUPPORT.

3. ETHNIC GRIEVANCES, PINARD INDICATES, ARE AT THE ROOTS OF THE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT AND SOCIOLOGICALLY DISTINCT FRENCH-CANADIAN SOCIETY PROVIDES AN INSTITUTIONAL PROP FOR THE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT. FEAR OF ECONOMIC COST ASSOCIATED WITH SEPARATISM IS MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR INHIBITING SUPPORT FOR PQ AS WELL AS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL OPTIONS FAVORED BY THAT PARTY. PQ DRAWS STRONGEST SUPPORT FROM AMONG YOUNG, WELL-EDUCATED, MIDDLE CLASS PROFESSIONALS. IT IS LEAST STRONG AMONG BUSINESSMEN AND FARMERS. DESPITE PARTY'S SOCIAL ECONOMIC REFORMIST TENDENCIES, IT IS NOT PARTICULARLY WELL SUPPORTED BY WORKING CLASS OR LOWER MIDDLE CLASS WHITE-COLLAR WORKERS. LARGE PERCENTAGE OF QUEBECOIS HOLD STRONG FEELING (65 PERCENT) THAT "THINGS ARE GOING BADLY" IN QUEBEC. PINARD CONTENTS THIS PERCEPTION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DECLINE IN SATISFACTION WITH AND SUPPORT FOR THE PQ. FURTHER DETERIORATION IN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS "CAN ONLY HARM" PQ AS WELL AS CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPTIONS IT FAVORS. END SUMMARY.

4. QUEBEC'S MOST PROMINENT POLLING EXPERT, MAURICE PINARD, RECENTLY COMPLETED A STUDY OF PUBLIC OPINION POLLING IN QUEBEC ANALYZING SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE, FOR SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION AND FOR VARIOUS FORMS OF CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION AND FOR THE PARTI QUEBECOIS. (A COPY OF THE STUDY IN FRENCH WILL BE POUCHED TO ADDRESSES) THE MAIN POINTS OF PINARD'S ANALYSIS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE:

1) STABILIZED AT ABOUT 18 PERCENT BY 1977 BUT OPPOSITION DECLINED TO 58 PERCENT SHORTLY AFTER THE NOVEMBER 1976 ELECTION.

2. IN 1977, THERE WAS A GROWTH IN OPPOSITION MOUNTING TO 70 PERCENT. PINARD EXTRAPOLATES THAT THIS COULD RESULT IN ACTUAL VOTE OF 20 PERCENT FOR AND 80 PERCENT OPPOSED IF UNDECIDED VOTE IS ADDED FOLLOWING SAME PROPORTION AS THOSE WHO EXPRESSED PREFERENCE. THIS IS PRACTICE AMONG POLLSTERS WHICH HAS BORNW TEST OF TIME IN QUEBEC.

3. IN PAST YEAR THERE HAS BEEN TENDENCY FOR UNDECIDED WHO LEAN TOWARDS OPPOSITION TO INDEPENDENCE TO HARDEN VIEW, WHILE THOSE UNDECIDED WHO TEND TO FAVOR INDEPENDENCE HAVE REMAINED UNDECIDED AND MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN JOINED BY SOME OF THOSE WHO PREVIOUSLY FAVORED INDEPENDENCE.

4. IF TENDENCY FOR STABILIZATION OF SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE CONTINUES, THE ASSERTIONS OF THE INEVITABILITY OR OF THE IRREVERSABILITY OF INDEPENDENCE OFTEN REPEATED BY MR LEVESQUE SEEM INCREASINGLY UNREALISTIC.

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
IO-13 ACDA-12 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01  
TRSE-00 HA-05 /110 W  
-----101810 041458Z /41

P 032230Z APR 78  
FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1291  
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY  
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5) SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NUMBER WHO SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT PQ MAY BE EXPLAINED BY FACT THAT PQ HAS SEPERATED TWO ISSUES BY ADOPTING REFERENDUM PLANK

IN 1974. STABILIZATION OF SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE, DESPITE PQ ELECTORAL VICTORY, TENDS UNDERCUT LONG HELD THESIS THAT IT WILL BE EASIER TO MOBILIZE SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE WHILE PQ IS IN POWER.

B. SUPPORT FOR SOVEREIGNTY ASSOCIATION:

1) SUPPORT FOR SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE INCREASED SINCE 1970.

2) SEVERAL POLLS TAKEN IN 1977 INDICATE SUPPORT TO BE BETWEEN

30 - 40 PERCENT.

3) OPPOSITION TO S-A VARIES WITH NATURE OF QUESTION BUT HAS CONSISTENTLY BEEN 50 PERCENT OR MORE SINCE 1970.

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4) PINARD RECKONS REFERENDUM HELD AT PRESENT ON QUESTION OF S-A WOULD RESULT IN ROUGHLY 40 PERCENT FAVORABLE AND 60 PERCENT AGAINST.

5) FOR BETTER ANALYSIS, SUPPORTERS OF S-A SHOULD BE DIVIDED INTO WHAT PINARD DESCRIBES AS "CONDITIONAL SOVEREIGNTISTS" AND "UNCONDITIONAL SOVEREIGNTISTS". THE "UNCONDITIONAL SOVEREIGNTISTS" ARE THOSE WHO WOULD SUPPORT S-A EVEN IF THE ASSOCIATION PORTION OF FORMULA WERE DROPPED. THUS THEY REALLY SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE. CONDITIONAL SOVEREIGNTISTS, ON OTHER HAND, ARE THOSE WHO VIEW ASSOCIATION AS INDISPENSABLE. WHEN ITS PROSPECTS BECOME QUESTIONABLE, THEIR SUPPORT WEAKENS. SUPPORTERS OF S-A DIVIDE ALMOST EQUALLY BETWEEN TWO VIEWS. PINARD CONCLUDED FROM POLLS CONDUCTED IN LATE 1977 THAT CONDITIONALS HOLD THEIR VIEW LEAST STRONGLY. RECENT INDICATIONS SUPPORT FOR S-A IS FALLING MAY REFLECT GROWING DOUBT AMONG "CONDITIONALS" THAT ASSOCIATION WITH REST OF CANADA IS POSSIBLE.

6) KEY GROUP IN ANY REFERENDUM WILL BE CONDITIONAL SOVEREIGNTISTS, PINARD CONTENDS. MANY OF THEM WILL SEEK ASSURANCE THAT SOVEREIGNTY AND ASSOCIATION ARE INSEPARABLE BEFORE VOTING. IF CONDITIONALS ARE UNCERTAIN AS TO PROSPECTS OF ASSOCIATION, MANY WILL VOTE NO IN REFERENDUM.

C. INTENSITY WITH WHICH INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY ASSOCIATION OPTIONS ARE HELD:

1) PINARD HAS REVISED HIS OPINION OF THE DEGREE OF INTENSITY WITH WHICH PEOPLE SUPPORT S-A. PREVIOUSLY, HE BELIEVED THAT SUPPORT WAS FIRM AND NOT EASILY SHIFTABLE. HE NOW BELIEVES THAT SUPPORT AMONG "CONDITIONAL SOVEREIGNTISTS" IS RELATIVELY SOFT AND EASILY INFLUENCED BY EVENTS WHICH CAST DOUBT ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FEASIBILITY OF THE "ASSOCIATION" ELEMENT INFORMULA.

D. SUPPORT FOR REVISED FEDERAL CONSTITUTION:

1) WHEN COMPARED WITH OTHER OPTIONS, I E STATUS QUO, S-A,  
OR INDEPENDENCE, CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION IS BY FAR MOST POPULAR  
OPTION. WHEN PREFERENCE FOR REVISED CONSTITUTION IS COMBINED  
WITH THA T FOR STATUS QUO RESULTS OF POLLS INDICATE 55-60  
PERCENT SUPPORT "FEDERALIST" SOLUTION.

E. SUPPORT FOR PQ:

1) SATISFACTION WITH PQ HAS STEADILY DECLINED SINCE IT  
REACHED A HIGH OF 50 PERCENT SHORTLY AFTER TH E NOVEMBER  
ELECTION. CONVERSELY, DISSATISFACTION WITH PQ HAS GROWN  
APACE. RECENT POLLS INDICATE A MAJORITY ARE NOW DISSATISFIED  
WITH GOQ.

2) INTENTION TO VOTE FOR PQ SEEMS TO BE FOLLOWING SAME  
TREND. IN EARLY 1977 SOME 57 PERCENT OF VOTERS DECLARED THEM-  
SELVES READY TO VOTE FOR PQ. MOST RECENT POLLS INDICATE VOTER  
SUPPORT FOR PQ HAS FALLEN TO ABOUT 40 PERCENT. AT SAME TIME,  
LIBERAL PARTY MAY HAVE MARGINAL ADVANTAGE IN VOTER PREFERENCE.

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IO-13 ACDA-12 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01  
TRSE-00 HA-05 /110 W

-----102358 041459Z /42

P 032230Z APR 78

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1292

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3) PINARD BELIEVES PQ WOULD OBTAIN ABOUT SAME LEVEL OF POPULAR  
SUPPORT (41 PERCENT) AS IN NOVEMBER 1976 SHOULD AN ELECTION  
BE HELD "TOMORROW". ALL EVIDENCE , HE CONTENDS, POINTS TO  
CONCLUSION THAT PQ'S "HONEYMOON" WITH ELECTORATE IS OVER.

4) PINARD CONCLUDES AS WE DID AFTER LAST ELECTION, THAT

DIVISION OF FEDERALIST VOTES BETWEEN LIBERALS AND UNION  
NATIONALE "GREATLY FACILITATED" PQ VICTORY. A UNION OF OPPOSITION  
FORCES OR A LARGE SCALE SHIFT BACK TO LIBERAL S COULD "EASILY  
DEFEAT PQ." IF PRESENT TRENDS CONTINUE, ONLY DIVISION IN  
FEDERALIST RANKS COULD KEEP PQ IN POWER AFTER ANOTHER ELECTION.

F. FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE SUPPORT FOR CONSTITUTIONAL OPTIONS:

1) ETHNIC GRIEVANCES ARE AT ROOT OF THE INDEPENDENTIST  
MOVEMENT PROPORTION OF QUEBECOIS WHO HARBOR THESE FEELINGS OF  
GRIEVANCE IS GREATER THAN THAT SUPPORTING EITHER INDEPENDENCE  
OR S-A.

2) FACT THAT FRENCH-CANADIANS "SOCIOLOGICALLY" FORM A DISTINCT  
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SOCIETY FURTHER SUPPORTS INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT. PINARD POINTS  
OUT THAT IN CANADA THERE ARE TWO DISTINCT SOCIETIES EACH WITH  
WITH ITS OWN ALMOST COMPLETE SET OF CONSTITUTIONS. IT IS QUITE  
NATURALLY IS THE REASON QUEBECOIS FEEL PRIMARY LOYALTY TOWARDS  
THEIR OWN SOCIETY AND NOT TOWARDS CANADA AS A WHOLE.

IT ALSO EXPLAINS THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT IN  
QUEBEC WHICH THEY VIEW AS THEIR OWN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS.  
PINARD FOUND IN RECENT POLL THAT SOME 56 PERCENT OF FRENCH CANADIANS  
IDENTIFIED FIRST WITH GOQ WHILE ONLY 27 PERCENT IDENTIFIED FIRST  
WITH THE GOC. HE COMMENTS THAT SUCH A PHENOMENON IS BOUND  
TO FAVOR INDEPENDENTIST OPTIONS.

3) PRESUMED ECONOMIC COST IS BY FAR MOST IMPORTANT FACT  
WHICH MOTIVATES OPPOSITION TO INDEPENDENCE. SOME 2/3 OF THE  
POPULATION BELIEVE THAT INDEPENDENCE WILL CAUSE DETERIORATION  
IN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. FREQUENTLY, THIS SENTIMENT IS LINKED  
WITH IDEA OF DEPENDENCE ON OR INTERDEPENDENCE WITH THE REST OF  
CANADA. CONVERSELY, ATTACHMENT TO CANADA IS VERY INFREQUENTLY  
GIVEN BY QUEBECOIS AS A REASON FOR OPPOSING INDEPENDENCE FOR  
QUEBEC.

4) CONDITIONAL SOVEREIGNTISTS WANT EMOTIONAL BENEFITS OF SOVEREIGNTY  
BUT ARE UNWILLING PAY ECONOMIC COSTS. THEY ARE DRAWN GENERALLY  
FROM SAME GROUPS WHICH ARE LEAST FAVORABLE TO S-A, E G  
THE LESS WELL EDUCATED, THE AGED, WOMEN, AND WORKERS.

6) PQ DRAWS ITS STRONGEST SUPPORT FROM AMONG THE YOUNG, WELL  
EDUCATED, MIDDLE-CLASS. HEAVY SUPPORT FOR THE PARTY AND ITS  
CONSTITUTIONAL OPTIONS IS PARTICULARLY STRONG AMONG INTELLECTUALS,  
TEACHERS, AND CIVIL SERVANTS. SUPPORT FOR PQ AMONG THE BUSINESS  
ELITE ON THE OTHER HAND IS WEAKEST RANKING ABOUT EVEN WITH THAT  
FOUND AMONG FARMERS. MEMBERS OF THE LIBERAL PROFESSIONS DIVIDE  
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ABOUT EQUALLY.

7) AMONG FRANCOPHONES SOME 49 PERCENT SUPPORT PQ AS TO THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL PREFERENCES, 36 PERCENT SUPPORT S-A, 19 PERCENT ARE INDEPENDENTISTS AND 16 PERCENT ARE "UNCONDITIONAL SOVEREIGNTISTS."

8) SOME 60 PERCENT PERCEIVE A DETERIORATION IN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS SINCE PQ CAME TO POWER. THERE IS A STRONG TENDENCY (40 PERCENT) TO BLAME THE LEVESQUE GOVERNMENT FOR THE SLOW DOWN IN RATE OF INVESTMENT IN QUEBEC AND FOR THE DEPARTURE OF PRIVATE COMPANIES FROM THE PROVINCE.

9) IN GENERAL, FEELING THAT THINGS ARE GOING BADLY IN QUEBEC HAS GROWN SINCE FEBRUARY 1977. AT THAT TIME, 42 PERCENT BELIEVED THAT THINGS WERE GOING WELL AND 54 PERCENT THAT THEY WERE GOING BADLY. MOST RECENT POLLS INDICATE THAT ONLY 34 PERCENT NOW BELIEVE THINGS ARE GOING WELL AND 65 PERCENT THAT THEY ARE GOING BADLY. PINARD BELIEVES THAT THE DECLINE IN GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH AND ELECTORAL SUPPORT FOR PQ ARE BASED TO A GREAT EXTENT ON THESE PERCEPTIONS OF "HOW THINGS ARE GOING IN QUEBEC."

10) IN GENERAL, PINARD CONCLUDES THAT FURTHER DETERIORATION IN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS "CAN ONLY HARM" THE PQ AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL OPTIONS IT FAVORS.

5. POST COMMENT ON PINARD'S ANALYSIS WILL BE SENT IN SEPTEL.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, PUBLIC OPINION POLLS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 apr 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978QUEBEC00105  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780145-0317  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** QUEBEC  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780499/aaaadggi.tel  
**Line Count:** 367  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
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**Message ID:** 69e380b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 7  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 05 may 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** N/A  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 3092387  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR SEPARATION SAGGING IN QUEBEC  
**TAGS:** PINT, CA, (PINARD, MAURICE)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/69e380b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014